Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9730

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USUN 1047

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR SCALI

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UN, VS, VN
SUBJECT: VIETNAM: UN HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS

1. I SPENT OVER AN HOUR APRIL 1 PRESSING WALDHEIM STRONGLY TO ISSUE A PUBLIC APPEAL CALLING ON PARTIES NOT TO INTERFERE WITH EFFORTS TO ENABLE REFUGEES TO REACH DESTINATIONS OF THEIR OWN CHOICE. WALDHEIM ARGUED ADAMANTLY THAT PUBLIC APPEAL WOULD BE WORSE THAN USELESS AND WRECK EFFORT BY QUEIT DIPLOMACY TO ENABLE UNICEF AND UNHCR TO EXPAND THEIR RELIEF EFFORTS IN COMMUNIST CONTROLLED AREAS. BACKED BY URQUHART AND GUYER, WALDHEIM FURTHER ARGUED THAT IT NOT PHYSICALLY POSSIBLE TO MOVE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES. EVEN IF IT WERE, HE SAID, IT SEEMED LIKELY THAT EVACUATION WOULD ONLY MOVE REFUGEES TO NEW LOCALES FOR FURTHER SUFFERING. WITH AMBASSADOR SCHAUFELE, I ARGUED THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE AND PRG MIGHT PROVE LESS ADAMANT THAN EXPECTED IN RESPONSE TO THE FORCE OF WORLD OPINION THAT AN APPEAL BY WALDHEIM COULD AROUSE. WALDHEIM FINALLY SAID HE WOULD EXAMINE QUESTION IN POSITIVE FRAME OF MIND WITH REPS OF HUMANI-
TARIAN AGENCIES AT SCHEDULED ACC MEETING IN ROME.

2. I OPENED SESSION BY REFERRING TO YESTERDAY'S LETTER TO SYG FROM YOU. I EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR UN EFFORTS TO DATE BUT NOTED HIS PUBLIC APPEAL OF MARCH 31 HAD NOT CALLED ON PARTIES TO AVOID INTERFERING IN EVACUATION. I THEN PROVIDED HIM WITH DETAILED ACCOUNT OF REFUGEE SITUATION
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AS OF 1 APRIL, AND DESCRIBED WHAT WE WERE DOING ON OUR PART.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

I EMPHASIZED BOTH URGENCY OF SUFFERING AND FACT THAT TWENTY SHIPS, INCLUDING SIX OF US REGISTRY, WERE AVAILABLE FOR EVA-CUATION ALONG COAST FROM DANANG - SOUTH. I TOLD HIM THAT EVEN AS WE SPOKE YOU WERE MEETING WITH YOUR TOP AIDES TO SEE WHAT MORE COULD BE DONE.

3. WALDHEIM THANKED ME FOR OUR SITREP AND SAID IT STARKLY DESCRIBED CONTEXT OF HIS APPEAL OF YESTERDAY EVENING. HE THEN GAVE US RUN DOWN ON UN EFFORTS BASED ON TELEGRAM JUST RECEIVED FROM SADRUDDIN. TEXT OF SADRUDDIN'S REPORT, GIVEN US IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE, FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: 1. FURTHER MY 404, MET AMBASSADOR LE VAN LOI RVN OBSERVER AT 1100 AND HUYNH CONG TAM DEPUTY CHIEF PRG LIAISON OFFICE AT 1200 TODAY SUNDAY AND CONVEYED SUB-STANCE PARA 2 YOUR 156.

QUOTE: 2. HIS MOST APPRECIATED BOTH SIDES WHO ASSURED ME MESSAGE WOULD BE CONVEYED AT ONCE THEIR GOVERNMENTS.

QUOTE: 3. APART FROM POLITICALLY ORIENTED EXPOSE BLAMING OTHER SIDE FOR REFUGEE SITUATION CONCRETE NEW ELEMENTS AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: AAA ON PART OF THE RVN LEVAN LOI EXPRESSED HOPE IN PERSONAL REPEAT PERSONAL CAPACITY THAT UN COULD CONTRIBUTE TO SAFE EVACUATION OF AT LEAST LIMITED NUMBER OF REFUGEES FAMILIES IN DA NANG AMONGST THE ONE AND A HALF MILLION DISPLACED IN CASES WHERE HEADS OF FAMILIES IN ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN OR WILL SUCCEED IN BEING EVACUATED SEPARATELY. TRANSPORTS INCLUDING SOME AUSTRALIAN SHIPS WERE ALLEGEDLY ON THEIR WAY WHEN DA NANG FELL AND ARE APPARENTLY AVAILABLE. HE FELT THAT PRESENCE PRG LIAISON OFFICE GENEVA WHICH "SUPPOSED TO DEAL WITH HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS" WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR UN AND OR RED CROSS TO INITIATE SUCH A MOVE. AMBASSADOR FELT SURE THAT "AS IN PAST NO ONE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE ONCE COMMUNIST TAKE OVER IMPLEMENTED". I STRESSED THAT THIS WAS CLOSELY LINKED WITH POLITICAL AND MILITARY SITUA-TION AND ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT FROM UNHCR ROLE IN AREA UNTIL
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NOW WHICH HE RECOGNIZED AND ACCEPTED. BBB TAM OF PRG STRESSED THAT DA NANG REFUGEES WERE VICTIMS OF PANIC RE-SULTING FROM RVN SCARE CAMPAIGN BUT THAT IN "LIBERATED AREAS" PEOPLE RESETTLING QUICKLY WHICH HE SAID WOULD MOST LIKELY OCCUR DA NANG AREA AS WELL. HE MENTIONED THAT MORE THAN 4 MILLION REFUGEES WERE PRESENTLY IN PRG ZONES AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD SHORTLY EXTEND NEW REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE TO HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS SO AS TO RELIEVE

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

ENORMOUS PRESSURE ON LIMITED LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND POPU-
LATION.

QUOTE: 4. AM STRENGTHENING UNHCR SAIGON PRESENCE AND WILL
IF NECESSARY ASK STAFF MEMBER VIENTIANE REGIONAL LIAISON
OFFICE TO RENEW CONTACTS WITH PRG HANOI OR SOUTH.

QUOTE: 5. LOOK FORWARD ROME MEETING. WARMEST REGARDS.
END QUOTE.

4. I VOICED DEEP APPRECIATION OF STEPS WALDHEIM HAD
TAKEN THROUGH UNHCR. I THEN REITERATED THAT OUR SPECIAL
CONCERN IS FOR THOSE WHO DESPARATELY WANT TO MOVE FROM WHERE
THEY ARE TO SAFE HAVEN. ONE SINGLE GOVERNMENT HAD SPOKEN OUT
AGAINST EVACUATION. HOWEVER, IN MANY QUARTERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY THERE IS MOUNTING DEMAND FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTION
AND WE BELIEVE THAT SYG PUBLIC APPEAL COULD BE EFFECTIVE. I
NOTED THAT EVEN CHINESE SO FAR HAD BEEN CAUTIOUS AND LOW KEY.

5. WALDHEIM WENT ON TO EXPRESS HIS STRONGLY-HELD VIEW THAT
PUBLIC STATEMENT AS OPPOSED TO QUIET DIPLOMACY WOULD NOT
BE USEFUL AND WOULD IN FACT BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE IN VIEW OF
HANOI'S COMMENTS. TO ASK FOR SOMETHING SURE TO BE REJECTED
COULD DAMAGE ABILITY OF UNICEF AND UNHCR LATER TO HELP GROWING
MASSES OF REFUGEES. NOTING THAT HE HAD NOT CONSULTED
CHINESE OR RUSSIANS, WALDHEIM SAID HE BELIEVED THE THING TO BE
DONE NOW WAS FURTHER DIRECT CONTACT BY UN WITH HANOI AND PRG.
BOTH LABOUISSE (UNICEF) AND UNHCR REP STRONGLY SUPPORTED
HIS VIEW THAT TO BUCK HANOI ON POLITICALLY CHARGED EVACUATION
ISSUE WOULD THREATEN THEIR ABILITY PROVIDE EFFECTIVE AID.
WALDHEIM SAID COMMUNIST SIDE FELT IT WAS WINNING AND WINNERS
DISINCLINED TO MAKE CONCESSIONS IN HOUR OF VICTORY. HE
WRYLY REFERRED TO OUR OWN EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE TURKISH
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PAGE 04 USUN N 01047 01 OF 02 012301Z

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 USUN N 01047 02 OF 02 012309Z

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Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 USUN 1047

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6. IN ASIDE, WALDHEIM SHOWED REAL EMOTION IN ALLUSIONS TO AMERICAN TELEVISION COVERAGE OF SUFFERING OF REFUGEES. HE MADE OBVIOUSLY SINCERE REFERENCE TO EXTREME COURAGE OF AMERICAN EVACUATION PILOTS AT DANANG.

7. WALDHEIM REFERRED SEVERAL TIMES TO DIFFICULTY OF DEPOLITICIZING EVACUATION QUESTION SINCE REFUGEES APPARENTLY INCLUDE LARGE NUMBERS OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS. I COUNTERED WITH REFERENCE TO UN RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENFORCEMENT OF ARTICLE 13 OF THE DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. IF IT WERE THE BEST WE COULD DO I WOULD FAVOR FOCUSSING ON EVACUATION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN ONLY. WALDHEIM MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE DID NOT CONSIDER US MOTIVATED BY HIDDEN INTENT TO EVACUATE SOLDIERS BUT THAT ISSUE WAS NEVERTHELESS REAL ONE TO COMMUNISTS. TO MY RENEWED ARGUMENT THAT APPEAL BY HIM WOULD MOBILIZE INTERNATIONAL OPINION, REINFORCE EFFORTS TO RAISE MONEY FOR REFUGEES AND BE GOOD FOR IMAGE OF UN, WALDHEIM REPLIED THAT PROBLEM NOT ONE OF "MEANS". THE PROBLEM, HE SAID, IS ONE OF GETTING POLITICAL AGREEMENT OF HANOI AND PRG. THEY WOULD ACCUSE HIM OF A POLITICAL ACT TO EMBARRASS THEM AT TIME THEY WERE PREPARED TO PROVIDE AID TO REFUGEES IN PLACE.

HE NOTED THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE CLAIMED THAT THEY ALREADY HAD FOUR MILLION REFUGEES IN AREAS UNDER THEIR CONTROL. SCHAUFELE INTERJECTED HERE THAT MAGNITUDE OF HANOI'S REFUGEE PROBLEM MIGHT ENHANCE ITS WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO UN APPEAL TO ALLOW REFUGEES TO BE EVACUATED TO SAFER AREAS.
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PAGE 02 USUN N 01047 02 OF 02 012309Z

9. NEAR END OF CONVERSATION, WALDHEIM TOOK INITIATIVE TO PROMISE THAT HE WOULD CONSULT HIS COLLEAGUES IN ROME ABOUT PROBLEM. HE REGRETTED THAT HE COULD NOT GIVE ME "CLEAR-CUT ANSWER" AT THIS TIME BUT HE WOULD STAY IN TOUCH. I URGED THAT HE MAKE POSITIVE EFFORT TO FIND BASIS FOR A STRONG PUBLIC APPEAL. I NOTED THAT THERE IS AN INCREASING DEMAND IN US THAT WE TURN TO UN. I DID NOT WISH US CONGRESS AND PUBLIC TO BE ASKING WHY

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

UN HAD NOT DONE MORE.

10. COMMENT: I THINK THERE IS VERY LITTLE CHANCE WALDHEIM WILL AGREE TO MAKE PUBLIC APPEAL ON EVACUATION. HE SEEMS FAR MORE CONCERNED WITH MAINTAINING IMPARTIAL CREDENTIALS AS SOURCE OF AID TO REFUGEES ONCE IT CLEAR THEY CANNOT MOVE ELSEWHERE. HE SEEMED GENUINELY CONVINCED THAT PUBLIC APPEAL WOULD BE USELESS AND PROBABLY COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. I BELIEVE WE PROBABLY HAVE MOTIVATED HIM TO MAKE STRONGER EFFORT THROUGH QUIET DIPLOMACY. BUT IT EXCEEDINGLY UNLIKELY HE WILL STICK HIS NECK OUT PUBLICLY AS LONG AS HANOI OBJECTS. I AM SATISFIED HE RECOGNIZES OUR APPEAL TO HIM WAS MADE IN GOOD FAITH AND THAT US POLICY IS AND WILL BE IN WEEKS AHEAD MOTIVATED BY GENUINE HUMANITARIAN CONCERN.
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Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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